



Partnership for Children's Oral Health

A network to ensure that all children in Maine can grow up free from preventable dental disease

www.mainepecoh.org



**Consumers for
Affordable
Health Care**

www.maine cahc.org

Advocating the right to quality, affordable health
care for every person in Maine.

Consumer Assistance Helpline
1-800-965-7476

September 24, 2020

Dear Ms. Hooper,

The Partnership for Children's Oral Health, Consumers for Affordable Health Care, and the Maine Dental Association are working in collaboration with many partners to achieve a shared vision: to ensure that all Maine children can grow up free from preventable dental disease. On behalf of this network we are pleased to provide comments with regards to the Clear Choice stakeholder group's efforts on standardizing benefits.

Oral health is an essential component of overall health at all stages in life. Children have the opportunity to establish good oral health that will have many benefits throughout their lives. Pediatric dental care is an essential health benefit and should be included in standard health plans for all children. Oral health has been included within Medicaid coverage for children since its inception, and children whose parents are purchasing standard plans through the Marketplace deserve equally comprehensive coverage.

To better understand the current picture of children's oral health, including insurance coverage and its connection with children's dental care access, the Partnership created a data brief.¹ Key findings include that at least one quarter of children in Maine lack dental coverage. Without a predictable way to pay for services, it can be challenging for these children and their families to maintain a relationship with a dental home and stay on top of preventive care. Including pediatric dental benefits in standard Marketplace plans would be an important step in the right direction.

For the children who are covered by insurance plans through the Marketplace, including pediatric dental in the Clear Choice plan design will help ensure that children can get the care they need. Cost is an important factor that prevents people from getting dental care.² In addition to making coverage easier to access, having dental care costs counted towards a health care deductible can help families secure the care their children need to restore their oral health and stay healthy.

It is confusing and challenging to apply for health insurance through the Marketplace. Wrapping this coverage into plans will benefit Maine children and result in better overall health outcomes for children across their lifespan.

¹ <https://mainepecoh.org/publications/databrief.pdf>

² <https://www.ada.org/~media/ADA/Science%20and%20Research/HPI/OralHealthCare-StateFacts/Oral-Health-Care-System-Full-Report.pdf?la=en>

Sincerely,

The Partnership for Children's Oral Health, Consumers for Affordable Health Care, and the following organizational and individual partners who support including pediatric dental benefits in Clear Choice standard plans in the Marketplace:

Organizations	Individuals
Partnership for Children's Oral Health	Lyvia Gaewsky - I am generally interested in children's oral health care
Promise Early Education Center-Head Start	
Maine Oral Health Coalition	Ashley Mills - I am a parent or caretaker of a child, I am a Marketplace health insurance consumer, I am generally interested in children's oral health care
Maine Public Health Association	
The Bingham Program	Vanessa Koch - I work with in other fields with children
Maine Primary Care Association	
Market Decisions Research	Jennifer Gunderman -I am a parent or caretaker of a child, I am generally interested in children's oral health care, I work in children's oral health care
Maine Children's Alliance	
University of New England College of Dental Medicine	Stephen C Mills, DDS - I am generally interested in children's oral health care, I work in children's oral health care
Maine Dental Association	
Maine Equal Justice	Kate OHalloran - I am generally interested in children's oral health care
Lincoln County Dental	
Maine Medical Association	Angela Sclar - I help people find health care services and insurance coverage
Medical Care Development, Inc.	Jessica Shaffer - I am generally interested in children's oral health care, I work in children's oral health care, I work with in other fields with children